A true State of the Case of JOHN FIELD *and* HENRY HILLS, *The Parliaments Printers:*

Shewing the lawfulness of their Interest in the Sole Printing of the Bible, and setting forth the causelessenes of those frequent Calumnies and Clamors, which have been raised, and are Published in Print by William Kilburne, *and others his Confederates, against the said Printers.*

THe Substance of the said causeless Clamours, may be reduced to these four Heads:

1. *That Bibles have been Erroneously Printed by* John Field *and* Henry Hills.
2. *That their Interest in the sole Printing of the Bible is* Monopoly.
3. *That they inhance the prises to the grievance of the people.*
4. *That they were protected in the exercise and enjoyment thereof, meerly by favor of some Persons lately in Authority.*

1. For Answer to the first, It is to be considered, that in all the Impressions of the Bible, even those that were made long before the Bible-Copy became the Propriety of the said *Field* and *Hills*, there have been Errors committed from time to time, and they will not deny, but that the Impressions made by them have been faulty as well as others, though in a less degree then some of them, as hath already appeared by comparing theirs with some of those formerly done, which have been Reputed most perfect. However, as hath been their Trouble and Damage that escapes should fall out in their Impressions, notwithstanding all their care, and the great charge they were at in maintaining Correctors; so for avoiding the like in time to come

they are ready humbly to ſubmit, to ſuch Rules, and to entertain, with a convenient Salary ſuch able Perſon for a Corrector, as the Parliament or Council of State ſhall think fit to appoint.

2. To the ſecond its anſwered, That the ſole Printing of the Bible-Copy exerciſed by the ſaid *Field* and *Hills*, is not a Monopoly in them, more then the ſole Printing of the many other Copies of Books can be reputed ſuch, which are lawfully enjoyed by the reſpective Owners and Proprietors: For, the ſaid *Field* and *Hills* do not, nor never did they claim and hold an Intereſt in the Bible Copy by Patent, but they became poſſeſſed thereof in the ſame Legal manner, as all other Proprietors are enabled by Law to enjoy a right of ſole Printing their reſpective Copies. And in their whole Proceed, for the obtaining of the ſaid Bible-Copy, they, utterly waving all regard to a Patent, have exactly conformed to the Rules of Law onely, in the ſetlement of their Right, as is enjoyned in the ſeveral Acts, formerly made by this preſent Parliament concerning Printing, and the eſtabliſhing and ſecuring the Proprieties of all men therein concerned.

1 The ſaid *Field* and *Hills* have a Propriety by Purchaſe, *viz.* from the Heirs of *Robert Barker*, which *Barker* expended many Thouſand pounds in the Charges of the Tranſlation, and in lieu thereof had it conferred upon him by King *James*, and about three years ago the Heirs of *Barker*, upon the receit of Twelve hundred pounds from the ſaid *Field* and *Hills*, did deliver up to them the Original Copy of the ſaid Tranſlation, as it was written in the Tranſlators own hands, with their whole Right and Intereſt in the ſame.

2 The ſaid *Field* and *Hills*, having thus purchaſed the poſſeſſion of the ſaid Copy, the next thing to be minded was to ſee, whether it were duly Licenſed, and that they found had been done alſo according to the Acts of this preſent Parliament.

3 The third thing enjoyned by the ſaid Acts for ſetling of mens Rights and Proprieties in Copies is, that they be duly Entered in the Regiſter-Book of the Company of *Stationers*; which in like manner was done, by the Maſter and Wardens of the ſaid Company for *Field* and *Hills*, ſo that nothing hath been wanting which the Law requires, toward the veſting of them with a Right to the ſole Printing of the Bible-Copy, as Proprietors and Owners thereof, excluſive to all other perſons whatſoever. This was made clear in all particulars, upon a long hearing at Barre before the Judges in the Upper Bench, in *Eaſter* Term laſt, where the ſaid *Kilburne* (who now endeavours new diſturbance) was the Perſon that managed the ſaid Trial, on the behalf of his Confederates, and ſaw the ſaid Title of *Field* and *Hills*, affirmed good by a Verdict of Law; and this, after a through reading and examination of all the Laws in this Caſe made and provided, and after a full hearing of all that could be alledged by the Confederates and their Counſel; ſo that a more ſolemn Trial hath been ſeldome ſeen.

3. To the Third Calumny about raiſing the Prices of Bibles, its anſwered, that at the time when *Field* and *Hills* became Proprietors of the Bible-Copy, the Government which then was, thought fit to interpoſe in this particular, that the People ſhould not be grieved, as they might be, if moderate Rates were not fixed and ſetled upon Bibles; This *Field* and *Hills* willingly

willingly ſubmitted to, and the Rates were accordingly eſtabliſhed, which as they durſt not exceed, ſo neither have they hitherto preſumed to do it, (as is publickly known) but if Prices greater than ordinary have been demanded by any, it is the Fault of Book-ſellers, who when they have bought Bibles of the ſaid Printers at the uſual Rates, having once got them in their hands, and not being limited to any cetain Price, do afterwards ſell them at what extraordinary Rates they pleaſe.

4. To the laſt, where they ſay that *Field* and *Hills* were protected in the ſole Printing of Bibles meerly by power of ſome lately in Authority, Its anſwered, that they never had any protection in this matter but what the Law afforded them, nor did they need it, the Law appearing clear on their ſide. And that the then Powers did on their behalf was onely to give them countenance in the time when the Copy was upon its Settlement, and this they did, barely upon account of the Publick Good, that the manifold Errors and Inconveniences which had crept in, by a confuſed Liberty of Bible-printing, might for time to come be prevented, by encouraging a Legal Settlement in certain hands, who by reaſon of their private Intereſt therein, and for their own credits ſake, would neceſſarily be more concerned to ſee to the well-printing thereof, than any common perſons whatſoever.

To avoid tediouſneſs, let this onely be added; That ſeeing Errors have been in all Impreſſions paſt; its humbly conceived the main thing conſiderable before the Parliament will be, how the like may be prevented in time to come; and if they in their great wiſdom ſhall think meet to preſcribe any Rules to *Field* and *Hills* in order thereunto, as it will be a great ſatisfaction to them being Proprietors of the Bible Copy, and the Parliaments Servants, to be by them regulated in the way of their Printing, ſo its like (their own Intereſt leading them thereto) that they will uſe all poſſible endeavour to anſwer the publick expectation by more perfect Impreſſions. And as to what concerns *Kiburne* and his Confederates, that they may be known, let it ſuffice to ſay, that their Deſign is onely to get a ſhare in the ſole Printing, and if that could be obtained (as it hath been often moved to the Friends of the Propietors) then the Quarrel would be at an end, and it would (by his Conſent) be no Monopoly; and if this would have been yielded by *Field* and *Hills* the Proprietors, the Parliament had not now been troubled with thoſe idle Clamors, which have had a Hearing by every Convention that hath been ſummoned ſince the interruption of this Parliament, and have been always diſmiſſed after Examination, with a full underſtanding of the Deſign of the Man and his Confederates, who have turned every Stone to no purpoſe concerning this matter, and practiſed upon every Power in being ſucceſſively, with deluſive Calumniations and Pretences.

FINIS.